

FACT SHEET



Fairfield Coal Gasification Superfund Site Fairfield, Iowa

June 2002

Introduction

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conducts regular checkups, called five-year reviews, on certain Superfund sites. EPA Region 7 has started its second, five-year review of the Fairfield Coal Gasification Superfund site. The site is in central Jefferson County at 107 South Seventh Street in Fairfield, Iowa.

EPA is doing the five-year review to make sure the cleanup continues to protect human health and the environment.

Several primary contaminants were found on-site in the soil and in the groundwater. These included metals, such as lead, mercury, chromium, arsenic and cyanide; and organic compounds like benzene, ethyl benzene, toluene, xylene, and poly-nuclear aromatic hydrocarbons. Three areas were identified as the source of the contamination: the gas holder pit area, the tar separator, and the relief gas holder area.

Background

The Fairfield Coal Gasification Plant manufactured blue gas from the late 1870s to mid-1937 and carbureted water gas from mid-1937 until 1950 when the gas system in Fairfield was converted to natural gas. The site is presently not in use.

The manufactured gas process produced two main hazardous waste streams -- tar sludge and spent iron oxide. The tar sludges were often sold or disposed in nearby pits. Some of the tar at Fairfield was pumped to a drainage ditch south of the plant. It is not known whether the iron oxide was disposed on-site or taken elsewhere.

Under EPA oversight, excavation of contaminated source material took place to a depth of 13 feet. Contaminated soil and debris totaling approximately 1,150 cubic yards was transported off site for incineration.

An on-site groundwater recovery and treatment system was put into place in 1990 to pump groundwater to where it could be treated inside the operations building. The site was fenced to restrict activities that might provide contact with the contaminants.

For More Information

During the review, EPA studies information on the site and inspects the site to make sure it continues to be protective. We encourage the community to tell us about site conditions or any concerns you may have.

Detailed site information can be found at the following locations:

Fairfield Public Library	EPA Records Center
Court & Washington	901 N. 5 th Street
Fairfield, IA 52556	Kansas City, KS 66101

If you have any questions or need more information on the Fairfield Coal Gasification site or the Five-Year Review process, please contact:

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